

271.86
1954

THE CARMELITES

(THEIR OBJECT AND WORK)

A LECTURE

DELIVERED BY

THE REV. JAMES MURPHY

IN THE

ACADEMIC HALL OF THE JESU

ON

The 11th July 1875

MONTREAL

Printed at Le Franc-Parleur's, 22, St. Gabriel Street

1875

954



THE CARMELITES

(THEIR OBJECT AND WORK)

A LECTURE

DELIVERED BY

THE REV. JAMES MURPHY

IN THE

ACADEMIC HALL OF THE JESU

ON

The 11th July 1875

DEVELOPMENT OF
CATHOLICITY

MONTREAL

Printed at Le Franc-Parleur's, 22, St. Gabriel Street

1875

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

PHYSICS DEPARTMENT

RECEIVED
JAN 10 1964

THE CARMELITES

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

One of the chief characteristics of the Roman Catholic Church is the completeness of her organization. She is made for the universe ; and therefore is her power fittingly universal. There is no human creature who does not find in her institutions, not only a place for existence but a place for self-perfection. She is the church of the rich and of the poor ; of the learned and of the illiterate ; of the weak who can only totter and of the strong who can do battle ; of the unendowed who are drawn to the earth and of the gifted whose aspirations soar higher than the stars. She has within her borders a place for the peasant whose vision is limited by the fences of his native fields, and for the Plato whose eye contemplates the dimensions of a universe ; for the narrow little soul of the Hebrew who can be tempted to serve God only by the milk and honey of the Promised Land, and for the broad, great soul of Francis Xavier who follows his Lord for love and loyalty, and not through fear of punishment or hope of pay. As in the scheme of nature there is a purpose for the ivy as well as for the oak, for the owl that blinks at an oil-lamp and for the eagle that gazes on the sun, so in the scheme of the church there is a perfection for the timorous heart of the loving St. Peter and for the heroic heart of the magnificent St. Paul.

But in one especial direction is it, that the universality of the Church's sympathies becomes especially remarkable. In the many strange sects which have been the product of Protestantism a most peculiar characteristic, common to them all, is the smallness of the sphere they allot to the action of woman. In this respect the Reformation was a direct return to the Paganism of Greece and the Mahommedanism of Arabia. Forgetful that if the active saviours of the race were generally men, they were sometimes women too ; that if, in the early Church, there were deacons there were also deaconesses, Protestantism except in those sickly imitations of our discipline by which she tries to round-off and rouge the wrinkles of her dying years, has never been able to assign to female energy any sphere of operation beyond the narrow limits of family and home. Even when the unerring instincts of Protestant Ladies have led them forth on errands of charity (and *« tales quum sint utinam nostræ essent, »*) Protestantism itself has manifested neither tendency nor capacity to organize the efforts of individuals into the sustained and systematic movements of communities ; and the Protes-

tant Lady who, with proper training and as a member of a body, might have had beneficial influence through many ages and through many lands, has, in her isolation and uninstructedness never been able to do much more than to make soups for the sick or to distribute flannels in the winter time. To do even that is of course most excellent. But compared with what women might do ; compared with what they are fitted and therefore destined to do ; compared with what they actually accomplish in that Church which knowing their destiny supplies opportunities for its fulfilment, all that, in so far as its power to perfect the agent is concerned, is contemptibly little. It engenders indeed kindly love of the neighbour. But love of the neighbour be it ever so kindly, is not the highest law ; and the soft, somewhat sentimental virtues by which it is attended are though the most enticing not the most elevating, possibly the most beautifully human, but certainly not the most nobly divine. For the great female heart, capable of such lofty self-devotion and of such mightily ennobling influence on all within its range ; endowed not seldom with such splendid aspirations after a solitude that no world can shake and a purity that no world can stain ; drawn often so mysteriously and yet withal so naturally rather to communion with the angels than to companionship with men ;—for such as these to be merely occasional hawkers of patent medicines and occasional distributors of small alms, and then to fall back upon the usual worldly routine of weary social ceremony and laborious self-adornment, all that is a lot much more heart-piercing than it was for Robert Burns to be a guager of beer-barrels or for the great soul of Shakspeare to make itself motly as an actor of plays. And yet is all that the highest thing to which Protestantism invites and encourages woman. The noblest female hearts wasted on follies ; the most splendid female souls sacrificed to trivialities ; in so far as religion is concerned no avenue of escape from the dreadful destiny of spiritual littleness—such is one part and an unspeakably bitter part of the wretched outcome of the Reformation. For women who are heroic Protestantism has no career.

In the Roman Catholic Church all is different. Among us there is no female aspiration, however lofty, which has not offered it a way that leads to its object and a guidance which makes the attainment of the object secure. Outside our Church, there is nothing more beautiful, and nothing more desirable than loyalty and permanency in wedded love. Against such loyalty and such permanency the most rooted qualities of our nature—its need of change and its failure under familiarity—eternally war ; and so, for mere human capacity, unassisted specially from on high, that love stronger than death,

Love that is faithful and fixed as fate
 Proof against years and troubles and tears,

is, except by the happiest conjunction of temper and fitness, almost an impossibility. But this, outside the Church so rare, inside the Church is secured by a special sacrament, whose graces, if not neglected, neutralize the action both of time and human changefulness, rendering it easy and a matter of course for the grey hairs and passionless bodies of three score and ten, to feel for one another, fresh and warm as ever, the bright poetic affection of their marriage day. And, for all those whose desires lie not in the region of wedded blessedness, no matter what the line on which they are attracted, the Roman Catholic Church has not only places but organized and methodized functions ever ready. We have only to turn over the titles of the various Orders and sisterhoods of religious women, approved of by the Church, to find how wide is her sympathy and how wonderful her skill. For, not only when a maiden exhibits a heroic resolution to live above the easy level of the softness of marriage, is her resolve sanctioned and strengthened, by vows which make it stable and by modes of life which make it secure, but, whatever special gifts of character and feeling (over and above her love of chastity) she may happen to possess, have at once awaiting them a select and special and exactly suitable career. She has a list almost inexhaustible from which to choose. She may range herself with those who care the sick, or with those who visit the poor, or with those who instruct the ignorant, or with those who attend the hospitals or with those who walk the battlefield amid the dead and dying. And whichever of these she selects, she will find imparted to her therein a perfection of training and a concentratedness of self-devotion, which give her an efficiency that no where else could have been even by approximation attainable.

But, outside these lines of activity, where the work of the Nun is more or less the work of the secular lady organized and perfected, there is a region into which in every generation some few feel themselves called. From the earliest times there has always been a recognized minority of nobler souls; enamoured of perfect solitude; enwrapped by contemplative thought; preferring suffering to action; bearing the sad burthen of their own generation; in silent, self-inflicted suffering, making some amends for the noisy pleasures that evermore are recklessly sending up their echoes in the ears of God. Their work visible is nothing to what it might be, just as Christ's work visible was nothing to what it might have been. He, had He been so minded, might have done vast things for Poetry, Science, Politics, and general material progress; but in these departments He did absolutely next to nothing; making

Himself a name more by passive endurance than by active industry, less by appearances before the public than by jealous shunning of the multitudes that He might be able to go apart into the mountains to pray. The Gospel history of the sisters Martha and Mary affords a similar example. Martha, it would seem, was a magnificent specimen of the active, energetic person, who loves, for its own sake, to be stirring, busied, and able to exemplify in the actual state of the dinner table the excellence of her own domestic administration, and who, even though the eloquence of the Lord God had brought a stillness on all the apartment, would have her eye ready to detect and her hand ready to remedy the disarrangement of a curtain or the unsatisfactory position of a chair. Mary, on the other hand, is a suitable illustration of the smaller class whose activity is of the soul much more than of the body; who think it a less high thing to be industriously busy in the life of earth than to be absorbed in contemplating the life of heaven; and who, careless of the rebukes of the industrious Martha, and knowing well that to be busied about many things is not the better part, heed little of the voices of men being evermore waiting to hear, (and hearing) in solitude and silence the solemn converse of the Lord. Such souls, with a passion for isolation, silence, thought, are never very numerous. Less numerous still are they when, to that passion of concentrated contemplation, is added on the other of undergoing for the world continued self-inflicted suffering. But even of that latter class every age by God's grace can produce a few representatives. And such are the Carmelites, of whom and for whom I speak this evening.

With that beautiful book of the Revd. Father Braun before the public, the latest addition to the world's true literature made by the illustrious Society of Jesus, it will not be at all necessary for me to speak, except in the briefest manner, of the Carmelite Order and of the history of its advent here. As a body of Nuns, the Carmelites commenced existence in the 15th century. But the formation of the order then, lacked the cohesion found only in the workmanship of a saint. It was not till a century later that in 1562, somewhere about the time that Queen Elizabeth commenced to reform Ireland, that St. Theresa was raised up to finish what less able hands had begun. Since her time to the present, the Sisters of Mount Carmel have had in the Church, among so many religious orders, a vigorous existence. Their number has never been great, for the class of women willing to lead lives like theirs—of complete solitude and isolation, of continual mortification and self-denial, of utter life-long abstinence from flesh meat and all delicacies of all kinds, of severe fast for almost all the year, of sustained prayer and watching, and of voluntary corporal penance

of the most trying kind—the number of persons at any time in the modern world willing to lead lives of that description, is always unfortunately very small, and so the Sisters of Mount Carmel, in any modern generation, would be easily counted. Still, by God's grace, they do not perish quite away. It is even managed for them that hidden from the world and silent though they are, their name and character should be noised far abroad, and that lands of cold, unlovely vegetation should cry to God and should be mercifully heard crying for the blessing of Carmel flowers. Up from your own Canada, the prayer has ascended; the prayer has been heard; and among you there have come to dwell, 3000 miles from their native home, six true daughters of St. Theresa whose prayers will be the best safeguard of your city, and whose self imposed suffering will shield your hearts and households from many a bitter woe. And Canada, this new land of such varied beauty, but from her very youthfulness not wholly hallowed by saintly associations, begins, in our own time, her loftier and truer history, lifting her young heart up to the glory of the higher life, where God is not alone the guide and master, but the sole counsellor and the sole companion. Unworthy cliques and petty quarreling will henceforth begin to displease our Canada more and more. And dreary, unspeakably dreary, though her long winter be, pinching it shall be and narrowing no longer, for throughout it all she shall have cheerful remembrance of these heaven-sent flowers that shall go on to bloom and beautify, and make all round the land perpetual summer, despite the wailing winds and despite the surrounding snow.

That this great work of the introduction of Carmelites into Canada—a work of far mightier importance for the Canadian nation than the opening of a dozen North Western railroads or the cutting of a dozen Lachine Canals—that this great work should have been initiated by a young Canadian lady, herself the first flower that Canada sent to Carmel, is a matter for great national pride and great national rejoicing. That a work so large and difficult should owe its present measure of success mainly to the wise energy of him whose achievements for the Church of Montreal are alike beyond number and beyond praise, our glorious and beloved Bishop, is what for all who know him requires no promulgation. That a work so dangerous for the spirit of Satan and the spirit of the world should have to encounter many and mighty difficulties was by all who realize how keen is the intellect of hell and how crass the intellect of the world, to be expected. But despite all opposition it has so far gone on, and go on it will prospering and to prosper. Six brave ladies from the old chivalric and kingly city of Rheims—the royal city of royal France—have volunteered to come among

us and found the new community. At Hochelaga they have procured a temporary dwelling and there they propose to establish not only a convent but a Church which is designed to be a Church of pilgrimage to the Sacred Heart. The funds requisite for the erection of these buildings have yet to be collected ; but they will quickly come from the bright enlightened generosity of the inhabitants of Montreal. The Community is as yet diminutive ; but Canada, fruitful in so many ways, is not barren of high vocations, and from the daughters of my own countrymen, I have no doubt many will be found who, filled with the spirit of perfect heroism which distinguished the Irish ladies of old times, will here, in a new land, revive the departed glories of Kildare and Armagh and Cashel and Clonmacnoise. We have all our little projects and our little plans. Most of them fail most miserably. Even when they do succeed, their success has only the unstable permanence of the crude conceptions and the rude workmanship of humanity. But this undertaking is from God. In the everlasting years and the more than Carmel stillness of Eternity He planned it out ; even then His mighty arms were stretched forth to gather into our new convent the choice spirits of our new land ; and reliant upon His ability to execute what He has designed and to complete what He has begun, I confidently predict that though in social and political ways the future of Canada be very uncertain, still upon the banks of the St. Lawrence, as long as the many voices of its waters murmur on to mingle with the mightier music of the ocean, Irish and French-Canadian Sisters of Mount Carmel will be found to raise in behalf of a generous (if careless) city one strong song of prayer and praise that will be effective, where politics have small efficiency, above the earth and beyond the stars.

But, Ladies and Gentlemen, such a course as I am suggesting, that namely young female lives so long gay and aimless should suddenly in our new convent acquire a still meaning and a strange solemnity, looks not only to all outside the Church but to many in it very foolish and very fantastic. It has about it even a cast of cruelty. It is giving up the world's freedom for the convent's self-denial ; the world's friendships and family ties for the life with strangers which the convent offers ; the world's cheerfulness for the convent's coldness ; the world's purple and fine linen for the gloomy unlovely habit of the Nun. « Why ! » the cultured child of the present period will exclaim, « it is a moral suicide. The woman that joins a Carmelite community is killing in herself all chance of that large development of the affections without which there is no greatness possible. She is shutting herself out from her kind as surely as the grave could shut her out. She is smothering every tender human emotion as

effectively as death could smother it. And all with the absurd aim of doing a thing which she could do as well in her father's or her husband's house! God's will is all that she is asked to do. And God's will can be done without putting oneself under a lock and key or hiding oneself in an ugly gown. Least of all can it be the divine desire to sanction that gentle species of gradual but certain suicide inflicted by unhealthy fasts and fanatic mortifications. » That is the way of reasoning the cultured child of the present period will surely follow—a way of reasoning only too often followed, to the detriment of all heroic endeavor, in our very prosaic and very unheroic time.

Nevertheless, Ladies and Gentlemen, there is nothing more certain than that such a mode of reasoning is wrong. And the puzzle is how even the world could argue so foolishly in a thing so plain. For, to take the lowest ground, what is it that the world's wisdom, even it, esteems the most? For what are most monuments raised? in whose praise are songs most sung? for what are accorded the londest and longest cheers? Heroic sacrifice of self; its heroes, they who in any noticeable way have devoted their lives for a good cause; they are the men of whom the world is proudest; they are the men whose very names are watchwords; the story of whose deeds sends a thrill through the world's heart; the picture of whose character is set up every where for the imitation of all. Now, suppose the Convent life to be all that the world paints it and nothing more, still if self sacrifice in a good cause is to be our standard of excellence, what cause is better than the cause of God and what self sacrifice is more heroic than the self sacrifice of the woman who gives up her nearest and dearest to lend herself limb and life, body and soul, to a stern service whose rewards are long-delayed and whose demands are the most peremptory and the most painful that can be made on humanity! The children of this world are wise in their own generation. But their wisdom is folly when occupied with unworldly affairs.

But, Ladies and Gentlemen, to go a step farther, are those things that the worldly man assumes really true? Is it true that the world is such a delightful place, full of nothing but pleasantness and gladness. Ah me! the words of the old much-pondering Greek have still a sad significance:—

Before the beginning of years,
 There came to the making of man,
 Time with a gift of tears,
 Life with a glass that ran,

Pleasure with pain for leaven,
 Summer with flowers that fell,
 Hopes as high as the heaven,
 Despairs as deep as the hell.

The years of man are short and bitter ; and happy is he who has not often been tempted with Job to curse the hour when it was announced in his father's house that a man-child was born. We should we conceal it from one another, when no one among us can manage to conceal it from himself ! Do not the winds moan, and the rains beat, and the flowers decay and the fruits fall, and the skies darken, and the sunshine grow dead and cold ; and do we not know that so will it be with each of us till we lie in the last hour when the sunshine of the earth shall touch our brows no more. And as we move onward towards that death and darkness, do we not all know how the years will treat us, light and gloom, growth and decay, flowers and thorns, grapes and thistles, pleasures of our youth and then when old age comes, the waves beating at our feet, meaning and threatening from that far-off ocean of Eternity whose shores we are all bound ! Ladies and Gentlemen, the convent is a stern truth-teller and pretends to make things better than they are ; the world is a spangled juggler that blows beautiful bubbles for little boys. There are roses in the world but the world knows they have their thorns. There are honeybees in the world, but with their honey they have also their stings. There are pleasures in the world but even the best of them are in the end known to be false and hollow. We all find it out in time. He that was our greatest and wisest found it out, found it out when he had gone the whole round of the world's delights, had drunk deeply of them even to the dregs. Riches, fame, wisdom, kingdom, dominion, all were his ; he enjoyed them to the full, for he denied nothing to his heart which his heart desired ; and yet he came to say in the end that vanity of vanities and bitterness of spirit were the issue and outcome of them all.

But, furthermore, does our man of the world describe convent life fairly ? does his conception of it represent it as it really is. Alas ! when he talks about it he talks about a thing of which he knows just next to nothing. He has possibly seen Carmelite convents and has possibly seen Carmelite Nuns. But of the Convents he knows little save that they are built and managed on a plan jealously peculiar to themselves, being, generally, almost completely hidden behind high walls and with never a human face seen staring from their windows ; of the Nuns he knows nothing save that they are never seen except for travelling purposes outside their convent, that they dress and demean themselves in a

noisless ghestlike way, as if they had been born and schooled in the awful land beyond the grave. But the Nuns themselves who have had experience of the religious life, who have felt from practice what such life really is, who have gone in and dwelt and explored where the doors are shut, could add a good deal to our world-man's information. They could tell him that convent life is not quite so blank nor quite so gloomy as his fancy paints it ; that there is a happiness beyond the convent walls which, if he once tasted it, he would seek forevermore ; that there are delights behind the convent walls which the world does not yearn after because the world does not know them ; that there is a music behind the convent walls to which all the music of his pageants and his palace are but as the maddening gingle of a country fair. For, what the Worldling fails to realize, the Religious realizes to the full : — this, namely : — that for those who seek them in solitude and silence, angels are not absent from the earth today ; that for the man of prayer, and the man of thought the New Jerusalem has come down already ; that Pagan Fancy which gave a God to every grove is not more potent than Christian Faith which gives a god to every flower ; and that even while the world is sleeping celestial spirits wander and watch through all its ways. For, this universe, as the Nun knows, is twofold, one part, the least important, visible, one other part, of infinitely greater moment, unseen. And though to mere natural power what we see strikes us more forcibly than what we know of but do not see, with the supernatural power of faith that is not so. For them that really believe, faith has always been the very substance of things to be hoped for ; the very argument of things that appear not. In old Pagan and Mahomedan stories we read, with a tolerant smile, how by exercise of some mysterious power the Magician made the invisible visible, showing splendid sights where no splendour of any kind was suspected before. I have even read how, whereas the vision of the other world was ordinarily vouchsafed to the Magician alone, still by having a certain ointment applied to their eyes even the commonest people had the power of seeing as the Magicians saw. Now what in these tales is fable and fancy in Christianity has been made real and true. Faith is the un-failing ointment and the efficient spell. It makes the invisible appear. It disenchant the darkness of the earth. It lets us feel the touch of our angel's hands and hear the rustle of our angel's wings. Nay God himself it relieves of half his mystery ; shows us His face, shining up to us from His flowers, down to us from His stars, and carries to us His voice speaking in all the seas that roll and all the winds that blow. But the faith that does all this is not the sluggish faith of the Ordinary Christian. It grows only out of

long prayer and solitary thought, such prayer and such thought as are found behind Carmelite convent walls. And hence does it come to pass that the efficiency of such a faith, though familiar to the Nun, is almost unknown to the person of the world, almost, I might say, beyond his comprehension. For him, the earth is just what it looks to the outer eye, a dismal lamentable place enough, full of error and ignorance, of confusion and disorder, of sorrow and sin. If you question him about the guardian angels and the ever-present God, he will probably, supposing him a Catholic, give the correct replies. But his habitual feeling is very different from what these replies would lead you to expect. Practically, the earth is to his mind, nothing better than a castaway place with its God sitting very careless about it, in His heaven far away ; a cast-away place where the wisest thing a man can do, is, to pick out its best pleasures, enjoy them in the best way, and then leave it to the death-hour to realize these awful presences that during life were never realized at all. In point of fact, the worldling's estimate of the earth leaves out of consideration, not only the glory coming to it because God is there, but the interest which it excites as the dwelling place of heaven-destined, undying, human souls. For him practically man has no supernatural destiny and the earth no higher purpose than to be the home of beasts that perish and of men that perish too. But to the Religious the earth is a different kind of habitation. It is not a market place, nor a grazing ground, nor an election hustings, but a terrible battlefield whereon is being fought out the bloodiest fight that the universe has ever known. It is the abode, not of men that are making or losing fortunes, but of men that even as they go down Saint James Street are walking on to heaven or to hell. It is the abode of the Devil and the bad angels who bring their hell with them through all their ways. It is the abode of God and the good angels whom their heaven accompanies everywhere they go. The Nun cannot forget the earth's true glory, cannot fail of seeing, what to the world-man is invisible ; and therefore can never be wanting in that rapturous happiness which communion with God and His angels brings. Her pains she may have and sorrows like other women ; but she can never be without comfort for the sorrow and balm for the pain. For, every thing about her speaks to her perpetually of that tender Father who is not in heaven alone but in every, even the meanest spot of earth. And not only does she know clearly but she feels intensely that Father's presence, His eye that watches, His hand that guides, His still small voice that whispers tidings of guardianship through life, and of Faith changed into vision, hope into fruition, when Death the blackest life hour has brought her to the dawn. And looking upward to that Father's

face ; hearing ever that Father's voice, she must be happy ; must be blessed by God's presence here ; must have calm confidence that for her great sacrifice he will be quick to give her a great reward hereafter, even that reward which He has promised to the poor of spirit, and the clean of heart and the hungerers after justice and the just made perfect ; which He has already accorded to others who walked as she is walking and who hold their predestined places in His home of many mansions now.

But, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is not merely in the rapturous enjoyment of their divine solitude, that our Sisters of Mount Carmel find the highest delight. It is indeed a valuable reflection for us all, that only in solitude and stillness can any greatness grow, and that 45 miles above us, the noise and nonsense of the earth are over, its very atmosphere is known no more, no wind nor rain, nor any flake of snow in the quiet region beyond the 45 miles, nothing there but the stillness of God and all His stars. That, so far as may be, in silent, absorbed, concentrated thought the Carmelites enjoy. But that is not their chief enjoyment. Their chief enjoyment is in working out their special work. And that special work is very peculiar. At first sight they look to be worthless, idle. They will not teach our youth, nor visit our sick, nor watch our hospitals, nor, except for the necessities of their own household, will they engage in any serious manual labour. They will be the Marys and not the Marthas of our community. The vocation of the six Carmelites now among us ; the vocation unto which we hope many ladies of this city will be directed ; is not to aid Montreal either by their skill in nursing or by their skill in schools. It is to bless Montreal by their prayers, and to save her by their sufferings. One of the greatest of the great Jesuit preachers, that is one of the greatest of the preachers of the universe, used to ascribe the conversions that he wrought, not even indirectly to his own ability, but to the prayers of a poor lay brother whose sole external office was that of a door-porter for forty years. The great victory wherein Israel smote Amaleck, hip and thigh, forever, and forever, was gained not by the sword of Israel, but by the hands of Moses, uplifted in prayer upon the mountain. The fasts of Tobias changed the destinies of a family ; the prayers of Daniel changed the destinies of an empire ; and when Francis Xavier had a particularly hardened sinner to convert, he converted him not by advice, or example or exhortation, but by going alone into a solitary place, then stripping his own poor shoulders, then lashing himself with whips of wire till the good blood flowing from the poor Saint's body and the dumb wounds pleading from the poor Saint's sides, forced God to soften the sinner's heart till he confessed his sins and proclaimed his sorrow

with many burning tears. It is by the principle which the examples illustrate and which is more amply illustrated in the life of Our Blessed Lord that the work of the Carmelites is directed. And it is in carrying out that work that they will have their own highest pleasure and earn for themselves your most generous support, bringing as they will bring upon your city blessings earthly and blessings heavenly, which God has hitherto withheld, but which moved by their mediation He will withhold no more. In this matter, so very important and so very much unstudied let me enter into a few details. With such a subject I must perform a theological. But I will not be sectarian, and from what I say whether here or elsewhere, no one, if I can manage it, will gather any offensiveness.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is an old truth and a terrible truth and a truth in practice terribly forgotten, that the ruler of the universe is God. Absolute and independent there is no other ruler than He. In the last analysis, all this world is and must be one vast theocracy. And this rule of God is not only general for all the race (as of a king to his subjects) but special to each individual (as of a tutor to an only pupil or of a father to an only son). In His hands it is that all failures and all successes, all progress and all retrogression lie. And this, as well in the natural as in the supernatural order. Without God's consent we cannot move an inch on the way to heaven; without God's help we cannot win an atom of success on earth. If we are in Grace, shall we persevere in it; if we are in sin, shall we recover Grace? If we are members of the true Church, shall we so continue; if we belong to a communion that is not true, shall we see our error before we die? If our intelligence be broad and brilliant, shall it so remain; if it be dull and narrow, shall breadth and brightness be yet its possession? If we are strong and healthful, shall our health be abiding; if we are weak and sickly shall our health be restored? If we are wealthy and prosperous, shall we go on to be so; if we are poor and unfortunate shall our bitter condition so remain? If our hearts are happy and our homes joyous, shall the sunny life and the sunny dwelling-place continue our portion; if we have souls of sorrow and houses of desolation, shall our tears be dried and comfort come to us for the dear dead eyes and the dear dead lips that we have put beneath the clay? Ladies and Gentlemen, to all these questions and to each of them there is but one answer: a solemn one, well worth remembering:—each of these things shall be, precisely as, and not otherwise than, the Lord pleases. But the Lord's pleasure is not a whim. He rules the race by fixed and for the most part by known laws. And one of these, perhaps the most rigid and certainly the most fundamental is contained in

His own words: « Ask and you shall receive. » Prayer to God ; application of Him to make right what is wrong and to keep right what is so already ; that is the great agent upon which not only the eternal destiny but the temporal destiny of the world depends. It is a hidden agent and works invisibly. But it is the agent whose work is mightiest and whose performances have the most splendid permanence. It saves the souls : it heals the bodies ; it insures the talents ; it makes the fortunes ; it wins the battles ; it ends the wars. And all this it does, because, so to speak, it engages the action and employs the services of God.

Now, all this being the case, and, even in the natural order, the world being what we know it, a complex place where the solemn problem of life is solved with surpassing difficulty, that each of us should be a prayerful person or be at least fenced round with the prayers of others, is, for each of us, a matter not only of first and fundamental importance but of strict inevitable necessity. But what we all ought to be not most of us in our own persons really are. I am not now preaching : I am only lecturing ; and therefore as a man of the world I can assume what in the world I learned to be a fact ; this namely : that whereas Christ orders our prayer to be unceasing most of us pray little and some of us pray not at all. Nor in this are we very peculiar ; the same thing was true, though not true in the same degree, of all generations. Still some prayer, in odd corners of the world, does really go on ; just as despite the general ignorance and the smattering that impudently calls itself scholarship, a few real scholars yet remain, who set themselves sedulously to gather dead truth and breathe into it the breath of life which genius only can bestow and who knowing that education means not so much the collecting of facts as the development of powers, bend themselves jealously to make their own minds educated, tall and shapely and strong and supple and firm of hand and keen of eye. And as it is the few men of real light who keep the many of the masses from utter darkness, so is it the few who pray that keep the world from destruction. Well is it for our poor earth-boat that she carries, in each generation, some Cæsar and his fortunes ; well for the cities worse than the Cities of the Plain, the Londons that dwarf Sodom and the New-Yorks that dwarf Gomorrah, well for them, that in their midst ten just are always found ! And inexpressibly well, will it be for this City of Montreal ; rid will she be of much vile trickery and much mean dishonesty ; saved will she be from much stern suffering which these things engender ; when down by her river banks she will have all day and all night going up for her to heaven the supplications of those pure hearts of Carmel—friends and spouses of the Master, with whom to pay for her will be a profession, whose

prayers will be sure of vanquishing love-strengthened the heart of God. The world knows little of its best friends. The poor Money-grubber whose wretched little heart has grown metal strangely softened as when he was a boy and knows not that awful miracle was wrought by a few words from a poor beggar whom in a good moment he aided long ago. If the records of Heaven as they exist today were now laid open, it would be found that our City's progress in the past was due not to the poor pet-pulling of politicians but to the holy men and the holy women who have made Montreal the great religious centre and the sacred spot of all America ; and when in the valley of Ichoshaphat the history from this day forward shall be revealed it will be seen that the destiny of glory which, please God, awaits her, was determined and decreed in virtue of the intercession which from our Mount-Carmel caught at God's hands of mercy nor let them till they shaped and stamped us into a noble, heroic, high-aspiring nation. Our shortcomings, yours and mine, will be thus supplied and even these, my dear Fathers and Brothers here, who have gone out against the giant Amalec will feel a new confidence amid the rush of war, remembering as they will remember that on the Holy Mountain the latest followers of Moses are bringing strength to their arms and sharpness to their swords. With Jesuits to battle and Carmelites to pray Montreal is secure. Her march will be the march of a conqueror, from victory to victory and from crown to crown.

But not by Prayer alone will our new mediators lend us the great assistance. One other Christian principle as certain as the which I have just proposed is that every man must some way suffer and that every Christian must more or less remotely approach to Christ. When God turned men out of one Paradise He did not leave it in their power to make another for themselves and the man who presents himself in the halls of heaven with no scars upon him and marks of battle will cut a very sorry figure and hold a very uncomfortable place among the splendid heroes whose stern unbending valour brought them there. There should be no cowards in the camp of Christ as there are no carpet-knights at the court of God. But if one looks round the world, not crynically but with generous eyes ; and if he then turns these eyes to contemplate Christ upon His Crucifix or at His pillar or in His garden of bloody sweat, he must give way to the sore reflection that between the one picture and the others there is a saddening contrast ; that Christians generally do not much resemble Christ ; and that a life of softness is almost always made a substitute for the bitter march up Calvary where yet red traces of the Lord are shining. We live in an age which, whatever be its attractions for

selves, is not in the opinion of its own best men (who live above and beyond it) at all an improvement on ages past away. Little is and little achievements, little thoughts and little souls are its outcome. It is an age to be wept over with many tears. How often how one of its own children and he, as I think, its greatest child, writes about it :

Achilles—

Achilles I would explain for the ladies, was the great Greck hero, the Trojan war, who in much anger remained for a long space active during which time for want of his surpassing valour the reaks suffered very sorely.—

Achilles ponders in his tent,
The kings of modern thought are dumb;
Silent they are but not content,
They wait to see the future come;
They have the grief men had of yore,
But they contend and cry no more.

They weep long watches of the night
For larger men and larger days,
Great kingly hearts, great faces bright
With thoughts that set their brains ablaze :
Theirs tears the men of mirth deride
But great Carlyle is at their side.

Great Dante with his shadowy soul,
Great Milton with his music lips,
Great Shakspeare wild and wise and whole,
Great Byron with sublime eclipse :
The great are gone ; and pigmies tread
Through ashes of the giant dead.

There yet perhaps may dawn an age
More fortunate alas ! than we,
Which without hardness will be sage,
And gay without frivolity :
Sons of the world ! oh, haste these years,
But till they come, allow our tears !

Where is the brave man now who « scorns delights and lives laborious days » ! Where is the man now who will say of Riches with Spinoza : — « Sunt qui non habent, est qui non curat habere »
« Some men have no riches ; one man does not care to have them » What scholar now can more among us, frank and easy as a boy, bearing his weight of learning lightly as a strong man should bear it, like a flower ! Alas ! our generation has made great steamships, (easy things to make), but it has not made great men,

(things not produced with much facility). Our houses are larger than the huts of the Homeric age but the dwellers in them are not of the noble stock who

Drank delight of battle with their peers,
Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.

We dine better than they did in Plato's period, but the company we meet at dinner lack the qualities which made it fit for gods to be among the guests of the Sage of Academe. The highest virtue in man or women is heroic self-sacrifice, heroic self-denial and by that virtue the great of all ages, always so grandly gentle and always so grandly courteous, always so grandly ready to give way have been distinguished. That virtue is far from common now. In its room a low hungry egoism eats its way through all lines of life and classes of society and loves especially to batten on our brightest and our best. The flower of our young men are very often nothing better than worn out and worthless seekers of new sensations, or empty-headed dawdlers about city streets; the flower of our young women though powerful enough to save a hundred worlds—for to a knightly soul what earthly motive higher than a woman's praise!—are themselves perpetual slaves to some greedy lust of social conquest or some petty passion for self-adornment. The pursuit of self-pleasure is the trade of the time. A hat to-day; a bonnet to-morrow; the day after, some equally distinguished manufacture of the millinery genius, is the ruling deity. The flies of a summer, we buzz about noisily, sometimes over flowers, sometimes over fetid pools; and when the summer ends we end too; and not even in a fly book are our names known for ever more.

Now, Ladies and Gentlemen, against all this effeminate triviality the Christian religion declares a penalty. For all this, as sure as death and the grave, atonement must be made. Against it all must be somewhere found an offset of suffering. That offset God sometimes requires of our very selves; and hence the manifold misery and the stern tribulation with which a youth of softness is often balanced in a stricken old age. But often too the Divine Mercy allows the offset to be made by others. Some poor scape-goat goes out into the desert bearing the iniquities of the people; and the people are secure. The self-indulgence of many a sensual son finds ready pardon because of his mother's midnight tears. The enormities of many a brutal soldier are often outweighed by the voluntary self-scourging of some Francis Xavier. Many an Augustine is won by many a Monica; and the patience of many a Stephen purchases the conversion of many a Paul. And our city here—ah, she may have hope that much of her

petty selfishness and petty sensuality will escape unvisited their merited revenge, when, offering atonement for her, the sinless souls of Carmel shall by fasts and watchings and scourging stripes draw down upon her in one red rain of pity the Precious Blood of Him whose example they imitate and whose office they continue, crucified in these last times for our sakes and for our salvation. Down within the city the wine will flow and the tavern reek and the broriel roar; but yet even to the end of days shall Montreal be spared; for high upon our Mount of Carmel shall there be stern discipline and bitter pain to keep God's wings about the city that He loves and to shield her from the carrion kites that may wheel and wheel and glare and glare but dare not hurt and dare not harm her forever and forever.

Here then, Ladies and Gentlemen, you have the work and object of our new-come Carmelites. They will pray for us who pray not for ourselves; for us will they bear suffering which we ourselves refuse to bear. In this way will they win your support, for in this way will they save your city. Your duty it will be to give them a place of shelter and a means of living; their duty it will be night and day within their convent, to lift themselves to higher and still higher heights of holiness, nearer and still nearer to the face of God, that so they may be able to bring larger and still larger help to you and me and to all who need it—to the Church outside that battles with the world; to the men outside whose shoulders bend under weary loads; to the women outside whose hearts are worn and whose eyes are dim from constant sorrow; to the sin and shame, and want and woe, and desolation and despair, with which the whole world is ringing outside the convent walls!

And here too, Young Daughters of Montreal, you have before you the main attributes of that Carmel life unto which, God aiding, some of you are called. The summons does not come to all. It does not come to many. But hope we must that it is sent to a chosen few. They who are uneasy amid the world's unrest and long for a stillness as of far sea-depths or spaces beyond the stars; they whose souls are sick of the little life of the twittering sparrow and need the air which the eagle breathes; they who are unsatisfied with the spasmodic meditation and snatchy prayer of spiritual amateurs, and sigh for the concentrated contemplation of God's face and the concentrated converse with God's heart, known only of those who make prayer a science and meditation a study; they whose great hearts of love shrink from even spiritual selfishness and yearn for the long unseen martyrdom of self which saves a world: they who scorn the little, the narrow and the mean, love the noble, the heroic and the grand: unto such as these the call

will come, bidding them arise and go out from their kindred and their father's house, and gird their loins and brace their souls for the fierce fasts of the wilderness and the hard hammerstrokes of the mill. They will hear, these valiant ones, they will hear and they will obey. And obeying, they will prove even to the ignoble what no noble man has ever doubted, that the weakness of woman's body is well compensated by the strength of woman's soul, that the daughters of Mary (like Mary herself) are not alone our crown and glory but our models and our exemplars, and that the glorious female heart so true and tender, so large and loyal, has still its olden power, to save us by its suffering and to shape us by its love.

END.

